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Hot Dog: The Regular Fellows Monthly is a small men's humor magazine published by the Merit Publishing Company located in Cleveland, Ohio in the 1920s and 1930s. This particular issue is volume 1, number 4, published in December of 1921, and it was found at the I-76 Antique Mall in Ravenna, Ohio in August of 2019. This issue contains humorous short stories and poetry with accompanying illustrations, as well as some topical editorials about current events. Two specific articles written by editor Jack Dinsmore (real name David Israel Gordon) criticize public religious figures Rev. Dr. John Roach Straton and Billy Sunday, both of whom were strong proponents of the very new Temperance Movement in America and aimed to enact their opinions of morality into national law. Though the publication itself is largely humorous in nature, the editorials in *Hot Dog* reveal the broader opinions of those in opposition to the radical conservatism of early 1920s America, specifically concerning Prohibition. A comparison of these *Hot Dogs* articles to similar editorials written at the time reveals how the American public responded to political changes like Prohibition through the use of mass media.

The eighteenth amendment came into effect in 1920 as a way to combat the social destructiveness of alcohol in the United States. The law itself states that, "the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited" (US Const., amend. XVIII, sec. 1). Alcohol is just one of many social ills targeted by religious fundamentalists of the 1920s. One article concerning the Modernist-Fundamentalist controversy explains that, "militant fundamentalism as a twentieth-century movement of protest and defense sought to protect, preserve, and perpetuate an apocalyptic and prophetic message critical of contemporary living and apprehensive toward the impending future"(Chandler). Fundamentalists like Dr. Rev. John Roach Straton and Billy Sunday were energetic and even aggressive orators who believed in fire-and-brimstone preaching as a way to combat an increasingly secular society and encourage voters to vote in favor of Prohibition. These radically conservative figures used their public platforms to further widen the stark divide between the "dries" (those in

favor of Prohibition) and the "wets" (those against Prohibition) in the United States.

Rev. Dr. John Roach Straton railed against social immorality through sensationalist speeches and debates. His sermons proclaimed the evils of "alcohol, prostitution, political corruption, the modern theatre," and "sexual immorality" (Ray). In *Hot Dog,* Jack Dinsmore quotes Roach Straton in order to criticize the Puritanical views pervading America as a whole. In response to Roach Straton's assertion that, "'dancing is fundamentally wrong. It can't be anything else when it necessitates hugging by both sexes,'" Dinsmore argues that Puritans do not simply hate liquor or dancing, but that they are attacking pleasure as a whole (*Hot Dog* 5). Dinsmore completes his rant with a call to action to his readers, proclaiming that, "we who are young in spirit, [...] we millions who are normal, must declare Red Revolution against the Black Plague of Puritanism which is overcasting the sky of America" (6). This serious and opinionated article emerges surprisingly amongst a slew of irreverent, crude humor in *Hot Dog,* revealing the mindset of the many regular Americans who were exasperated by the religious zealots interfering with everyday American life in the early 1920s.

Much like Roach Straton, Billy Sunday, a Presbyterian Evangelist, also insisted that alcohol destroyed the American family. Sunday, however, was seen as a hypocrite by his many opponents. In fact, "he was accused of plagiarizing several writers, accepting money from businesses to help subvert labor strikes, and raking in enormous amounts of money from his followers" and "when he died, archivists found jazz records and brandy snifters in his home" (Moore 18). It is therefore no surprise that Jack Dinsmore refers to Sunday as, "sacrilegious, gross," and "the chief of the money-changers," owning "blocks of real estate [...] which he amassed through his degrading business" (*Hot Dog* 22). Dinsmore makes an overarching statement that, "religion has nothing to do with conduct or with our politics," and that Billy Sunday, "degrades Religion to the level of the marketplace" (21). Dinsmore argues that men like Billy Sunday use religion as their platform to gain popularity and wealth, attributing society's flaws to tangible things like alcoholism or tobacco rather than spirituality or lack thereof.

A similar editorial to that found in *Hot Dog* emerged from a weekly satirical magazine called *The Judge* just a year earlier and aligns with Jack Dinsmore's anti-Prohibition attitude. The writer stated that Prohibition is part of "a movement to put the Puritanical Sabbath into the Constitution" and surmised that tobacco would be the next to go in a religious crusade against "Sunday Pleasure" ("The Abuse of Power in Washington" 14). A decade later, *The Literary*

Digest polled the American public to find, as reported by the *Sarasota Herald* of March 20, 1930, that, "the vote for repeal of the prohibition amendment continues to lead over that for modification and also for enforcement" ("'Wets' and 'Moists' [...]" 1). The public, like the editorialists, were eager to voice their opinions of Prohibition. *The Sarasota Herald* quoted the *Literary Digest* as saying that, "'it would seem that the poll has effected a nation-wide release of pent-up feeling on all sides of the question'" (2). These additional primary sources reveal more ways in which the American public and publishers used print media to express their varying political opinions.

Hot Dog is a product of its time, revealing through its editorials the attitude of Prohibition dissenters who would buy and read such a magazine. Not unlike satirical publications today, this magazine pitted liberals against conservatives as editor Jack Dinsmore openly criticized the ideas of radically conservative religious figures. This publication would most likely appeal to men due to its bawdy and often misogynistic humor, but more specifically men who aligned with the "wet movement" against Prohibition and disagreed with the church interfering so much in law. Though the editorial uses petty insults, crass language, and generalizations to characterize figures like Sunday and Roach Straton, it nonetheless serves to represent the viewpoint of the vast number of Americans who opposed strong religious intervention in American government.

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